
BOROUGH OF THORNABY-ON-TEES.

Medical Officer's
Annual Report,

For the Year ended 31st Dec., 1897.

BOROUGH OF THORNABY-ON-TEES.

Medical Officer's Annual Report*For the Year ended 31st December, 1897.*

GENTLEMEN,

It is again my duty to lay before you my Annual Report for the Borough of Thornaby-on-Tees, for the year ended 31st December, 1897.

During the year, 564 Births and 267 Deaths were registered. The difference between these numbers indicates the natural increase to the population for the year, namely, 297. The increase to the population by excess of births over deaths has been 1832 from 1892 to 1897 inclusive. In a more or less working-class population there are no doubt considerable fluctuations in the actual numbers of residents at any given time. Taking the population to be 16,500, the Birth-rate was 34·18, and the Death-rate 16·18, per 1000, for the year.

Of the Births registered in 1897, 271 were males, and 293 females; or, an increase of eight over the year 1896.

Of the Deaths registered, 129 were males and 138 were females; 133 were under, and 134 above five years of age. The total mortality was 12 more in 1897 than in 1896. 95 died under one year of age, 38 between one and five years, 6 between 5 and 15, 14 between 15 and 25, 81 between 25 and 65, and 33 from 65 upwards—total 267.

The causes of mortality were recorded as enteric fever 3, diphtheria 1, croup 1, scarlet fever 1, diarrhoea 13, whooping-cough 17, cerebral diseases (including convulsions) 40, bronchitis and pneumonia 47, phthisis 24, heart disease 22, cancer 8, renal diseases 7, atrophy and debility 19, premature birth 15, natural decay 9, and all other unclassified diseases (including cases on which inquests were held) 40—total 267. Of the total deaths 73 occurred in the 1st quarter, 75 in the 2nd quarter, 67 in the 3rd, and 52 in the fourth.

In 1897, 36 deaths were due to preventable or zymotic diseases, giving a zymotic death-rate of 2·18 per 1000, as against 2·875 in 1896. The ordinary or non-zymotic death-rate was 14 per 1000. This is slightly higher than in 1895 and 1896, but lower than in 1893 and 1894, all being beaten by the record year 1892, when both zymotic and ordinary death-rates are taken into account.

Year	Zymotic Death Rate		Ordinary Death Rate		Total Death Rate
1892	1·37	— —	13·44	==	14·81
1893	2·5	„	14·68	==	17·18
1894	2·1875	„	15·5	==	17·6875
1895	4·3125	„	13·3125	==	17·625
1896	2·875	„	13·0625	==	15·9375
1897	2·18	„	14·0	==	16·18

During the year 1897, 68 cases of zymotic character were notified in the Borough, as against 172 in 1896, 198 in 1895, 297 in 1894, 119 in 1893, and 70 in 1892. Of these 68 infectious cases 33 were enteric fever, 2 simple continued fever, 15 scarlet fever, 4 diphtheria, 1 croup, and 13 erysipelas.

33 cases of enteric or typhoid fever occurred throughout the year in 22 households in 20 streets. In seven households there were two cases each notified in succession: in one solitary case there were five in succession. All the others were isolated instances. There appears to have been a recrudescence of this fever in the later months of the year—a point not infrequently observed. In every case, inquiries are made to discover causes or probable sources—the existence of any insanitary state—and the source of milk supply. In all cases, sanitary pans are provided so that the excreta may not be put in the ordinary privy ashpits, the contents disinfected and regularly removed and buried. The ashpit of the infected house and neighbouring ones are specially emptied and disinfected.

15 cases of scarlet fever were notified during the year, with only one recorded death. During the eight years from 1890 to 1897 inclusive, 697 cases of scarlet fever have been notified with 23 deaths. The year 1897 was exceptional in the limited number of fresh cases, as compared with 109 in 1896, 130 in 1895, and 222 in 1894.

In all cases, isolation is effected, as far as possible, in the infected household itself, and other children, if any, are debarred school attendance till disinfection by fumigation has been carried out after convalescence of the patient. Certificates of freedom from infection are supplied before the children are allowed to return to school.

The mortality from cerebral diseases was 40 in 1897, as against 41 in 1896.

The mortality from bronchitis and pneumonia was 47 in 1897, as compared with 51 in 1896.

The mortality from phthisis was 24 in 1897, as against 26 in 1896.

The mortality from heart-disease was 22 in 1897, as against 12 in 1896—considerably above most previous years, indeed.

The mortality from debility and wasting was 19 in 1897, as against 21 in 1896.

Inquests were held on 8 deaths in 1897, as against 15 in 1896.

During the year under review the registered slaughter-houses and milk shops have been inspected regularly and found generally satisfactorily clean.

Since last Annual Report, water and gas mains have been laid up to Thornaby Village. How far they are utilised by the residents in that part of the Borough I am unable to say; but it is satisfactory to know that a pure supply of water from the remoter tributaries of the Tees is available for the Village as for the rest of the Borough.

Independent and joint systematic inspections of the Borough have been made by myself and your Sanitary Inspector, Mr. C. T. Johnson, throughout the year, and, where necessary, sanitary work carried out as per list :—

Drains relaid, cleaned and repaired	...	14
Keeping of fowls discontinued	..	12
Yard Walls and floors repaired	...	10
Ashpits and Privies do.	...	20
Deposited nuisances removed	. .	5
Wooden buildings removed	...	1
Defective downcomers renewed	...	2
Ashpits specially emptied	...	89
Sanitary pans emptied on alternate days (fever cases)		36
Houses fumigated	...	15
Defective W.C. remedied...	...	1
„ roof repaired	...	4
„ spouting „	...	3
Ashpans renewed	...	3
		215

It only remains for me to say that there are two desiderata for the Borough yet unattained, (1) a Public Abattoir for the more efficient inspection of all meat killed within the Borough. and for the better protection of the inhabitants from various nuisances; and (2) a suitable Isolation Sanatorium for first cases of Infectious disease

I am, Yours faithfully,

THOMAS WATSON, M.D.,

1st February, 1898.

*Medical Officer of Health,
Borough of Thornaby-on-Tees.*

BOROUGH OF THORNABY-ON-TEES.

Medical Officer's

Supplementary Report.

For the Year ended 1897.

Medical Officer's Supplementary Report For the Year 1897.

GENTLEMEN,

In compliance with the request of the Local Government Board, I have to submit to you supplementary information as to the sanitary condition of the Borough of Thornaby-on-Tees to the end of the year 1897.

Drainage.—The drainage of the town is, on the whole, efficient, and is discharged directly into the tidal river Tees, through trapped outfalls.

Streets.—Most of the streets and back streets are now paved with scoriæ bricks which add to the actual cleanliness as well as to the tidy appearance of the town. If I were as sure of the perfection of the underground drainage as I am of the excellence of the street surfaces, there would be little to find fault with, but occasional defects in the connections between house and main drains or in the laying thereof are discovered and remedied. 14 such cases were dealt with during the year.

Water-Supply.—The water-supply of the town is abundant and of good quality. The wells used for domestic consumption in the village part of the Borough, after being cleansed out last year, have proved satisfactory during the year under review. Though the water mains have been laid up to the village of Thornaby, only a very few have availed themselves of its supply—the inhabitants I suppose preferring the water they have long been accustomed to, and which to them only requires the trouble of pumping instead of paying for. No wells or pumps, are known to me to be used for domestic consumption in the *town* itself. The whole supply is taken from the water mains of the Stockton and Middlesbrough Water Board. The taps are in most cases laid in the yards or back kitchens or in both. Houses with baths are a desideratum in a working-class population especially, and I hope to see more such provided in future years than are yet available.

Scavenging.—The scavenging of the town is done by contract under the supervision and control of the Borough Surveyor. Every part of the town has been mapped out, so that all shall be scavenged at least once a month, and all ash-pans cleared once a week. I am pleased to report that, on the whole, this work is well done. I hear very few reports of neglect these few years, in comparison with what I have in former years

in the sanitary history of the town. I have no doubt this is due to the systematic control and efficient supervision of the scavenging work in the town as well as to the better payment of the contractor in recent years. In other words, we get value for our money, and better health conditions thrown in, to the bargain.

Ash-pits.—In some of the older parts of the town, where the yard areas are too small, perhaps a better system to gradually introduce would be the use of water-closet combined with the present ash-pan-closet system. Many of the ash-pits are too roomy, and the floors below the level either of back streets or yards, so that they become sump-holes for the promotion of decomposition and the production of insanitary conditions prejudicial to health. I cannot keep from thinking that some at least of the enteric cases are due to such causes, when no other source of infection has been traceable. The smells from such ash-pits cannot be wholesome. We are doing away with these defective receptacles gradually, and I hope to see more work of this kind done in the future as occasion arises. It is, and has been for years, our rule to specially empty, and disinfect ash-pits in the immediate neighbourhood of enteric fever cases, and to provide sanitary pans for the separate dealing with and speedy removal of the excreta of all such cases.

During the year, we have not had take action under the provisions of the Public Health Act, 1875, with reference to diseased meats &c. "unfit for the use of man", though on one or two occasions, we have had what proved to be false alarms.

Neither have we had to deal with any discovered cases of overcrowding.

With regard to offensive trades we have to record the establishment of another bone manure business in the immediate neighbourhood of a similar long existing business referred to in my report for 1896. This has been done, against our advice, and proved one of our failures in the cause of sanitation.

During the year, the milk-shops were inspected regularly and have been found satisfactory.

In conclusion, I believe the sanitary condition of the town to be fairly good, and on the lines indicated in this and other reports, capable of further improvement.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

THOMAS WATSON, M.D.,

*Borough of Thornaby-on-Tees,
3rd May, 1898.*

Medical Officer of Health.

